

FLAMBEAU INVITES OBERAMMERGAU ARTISTS TO EXHIBIT CRAFTSMANSHIP IN WASHINGTON

TIMES' CRITIC DELIGHTED AT PASSION PLAY

Herr Lang, the Famous Christus, and Guido Mayr, the Judas of This Year, and Other Players, Who Also Are Noted Pottery Makers, Sculptors and Painters, Are Considering the Invitation to Come Here Next Fall for Exhibitions of Their Work.

By VICTOR FLAMBEAU.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."—Jesus.

OBERAMMERGAU, Aug. 1.

WILL Anton Lang, the famous Christus of the Passion Players, exhibit his beautiful pottery in Washington? Will the sculpture of Guido Mayr, the Judas of this year, be shown in our Capital City?

These great artists, and others of Oberammergau, who are producing rare arts and crafts in the native style, have been invited by The Washington Times to bring an exhibition of their works to be shown next season, first in Washington, probably at the Art Center, 1106 Connecticut avenue; then later to go to Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Chicago.

"I know you Americans are always looking for something new," said Anton Lang, when Victor Flambeau presented his letter of introduction from The Times, with the invitation. The Flambeau party arrived at Oberammergau early on Saturday, in order to attend the all-day Sunday presentation of the great Passion Play, which they, like other tourists, had traveled half the world over to see.

Lunch at the home of Anton Lang was the first thrill, after which they met Tante Anna (Aunt Anna), the sister of the Christus player, and she obligingly posed for them. Then they invaded the shop of Anton Lang, where his charming pottery is sold, besides many other things. They had a delightful interview with Herr Lang, and he graciously autographed his pictures for them, besides permitting them to snap him, also.

Flambeau had brought a collection of clippings and Passion Play pictures from American newspapers, in which Anton Lang seemed much interested. When shown one from a Washington paper, stating that many women had fainted at the first dress rehearsal performance, he asked eagerly, "Would that prevent them from coming?"

"No, indeed, it would make them the more anxious to do so," he was assured.

"I remember the day that picture was taken," Herr Lang said of another. "Two of the children were away just then. They are all in this one, and in this, which is a little different, as I am standing," and he selected two photographs, showing the seven children with their parents, and quickly wrote on them, "Familie Anton Lang, 1922."

One American picture greatly interested Herr Lang. It was of the Magdalen of 1910, who has since married a Yankee, and is said to be now living in Chicago.

Throngs Fill Village

But while we were talking guests were pouring into Oberammergau. They came by motor cars, by train, by carriages, on bicycles, and afoot. Among them were many Alpine travelers, with picturesque costumes, short knee breeches, bare-legged, and always a feather in the cap, or a bunch of flowers, wearing perhaps an edelweiss on the coat. By evening the village is full, and it is difficult to find lodgings.

The Flambeau party was very luckily provided for at the Pension Boeld, on the little Muehlbach stream. Herr Andreas Boeld is a member of the chorus of the Passion Play, and Frau Boeld's twin brother is the director of the play, Johann Georg Lang, also a sculptor. In the play of 1910, Frau Boeld had a part in the chorus, and as a child she also played twenty-two years ago, but today, being a married woman, she is no longer eligible, as no married women take part.

Although 5,000 people came to attend the Passion Play this week, there was only a scattering of Americans, so lost did

they seem among the vast crowd of Europeans, Germans especially. The Flambeau party had just come up from Italy, and they had left behind them in Venice a fine new exposition of modern Venetian art, painting and sculpture, examples of which, it is possible, may be shown in Washington next winter. At least the invitation of The Washington Times has been extended also to the Venetian artists, of whom there are many brilliant stars.

Scenery Is Beguiling

Coming by way of Verona, where Juliet's tomb is fabled to be, enthusiastic members of the Washington Flambeau group set out immediately on arrival, about 10 in the evening, to find the sacred spot, as also the romantic balcony where Romeo confessed his love. For they could not stay next day, since they must hurry north through the Austrian Tyrol to Innsbruck and thence to Oberammergau.

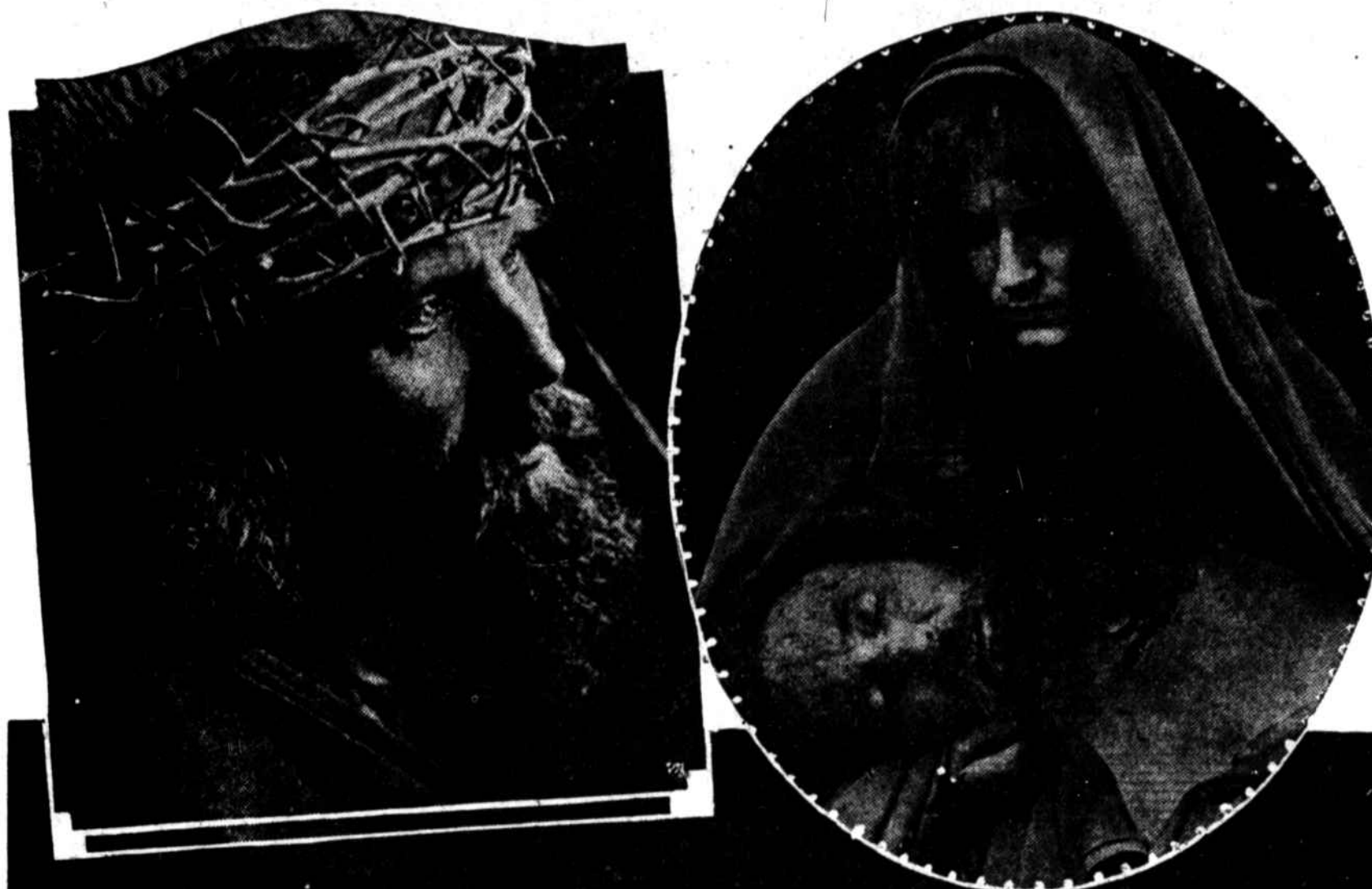
It was well the Alpine scenery along the way was so beguiling, for the travelers went two days without luncheon, and crossed through two frontiers, passing the Austrian and German customs, and rode third-class on their first-class tickets before they arrived at length in the most fascinating spot they had yet found—Oberammergau.

It was all they expected, and more, and they had already thrilled at many new sights, for they are an enthusiastic party. So they didn't complain at losing their lunches, and they even liked third-class, because they said they met such nice people, native tourists, many of whom spoke English fluently and often gave them much helpful advice.

Strangers one day shared their own luncheon with them in order that the Flambeau people might not starve. Some Americans make a lot of trouble for themselves in traveling, and it is a little difficult to get accurate information as to how much money one must take along. For everyone looks like a millionaire with a big roll of bills, but in Austria and Germany appearances are deceiving.

HERE are some wonderful photographs of the Passion Play of 1922, sent to The Times by Flambeau. Mary, the Mother (Martha Veit), with the Christus (Anton Lang), and the Christus with the Cross. Next a scene from The

Last Supper. Inset shows Anton Lang and his family, and beneath Joseph Alois Daisenberger, author of the text used for the Passion Play. Lower right, Pension Boeld, where the Flambeau party stopped at Oberammergau, and lower left, Peter (Andreas Lang), who also plays St. Matthew.



"Richer than a Rockefeller!" laughed our courier, Herr Theodore Seeger, a medical student from the University of Innsbruck, who piloted the Flambeau party through Austria and Germany. The young lady to whom he spoke had just changed some American money into German marks, 450 to the dollar that day, and she had already a bunch of Austrian bills, 35,000 kronen to the dollar. For respectable money, that before the war ranked with our American quarter, or above it sometimes in the case

of the German mark, this is a terrible "comedown," but it is an actual fact.

Travel Rates Cheap

Flambeau could have taken his whole party from Innsbruck to Oberammergau, besides paying their hotel bill at the former place, for a little over \$3 of American money changed into kronen, and he is of the opinion that the tourist company which handles the ac-

counts for the trip actually gets out of it even better than that. A loaf of bread in Austria has sold for 2,000 kronen, we are told, or between 5 and 10 cents of American money. Yet the people look prosperous, and all are very evidently hard at work and cheerful. Of course, we have not yet seen much of either Germany or Austria, so it is not fair to judge, as these Alpine people are always frugal and sober, and know how to provide for themselves.

Today at the Passion Play, where Flambeau was sitting second class, as the one second-class ticket fell to his favored lot, while the others had first class, he looked down and discovered that a young peasant woman was standing, as so many do who come in from the country, and she had slipped off her heavy shoes to rest her feet as she stood there. Of course, Flambeau had to take a turn at standing then, but he was lucky, as, usual, for somebody soon beckoned him into a vacant first-class seat. It doesn't matter where you sit

PLAYERS ALL ARE PERFECT IN THEIR LINE

Acting of Anton Lang Is Unsurpassed and He Dominates the Play From Beginning to End. "Talk About Simple, Unsophisticated Players! These People Are Grand in Their Conception of the Great Drama and Many of the Chorus Sing Like Real Opera Stars."

or stand to see the Passion Play. It's wonderful from every point. And if you only hear the words, and in German, too, as of course they are spoken, still you get a constant thrill. The acting of Anton Lang is impassioned, and he dominates the play from beginning to end. Talk about simple, unsophisticated players! These people are grand in their conception of the great drama, and many of the chorus sing like real opera singers, only they have not been trained to anything artificial. Then they all walk, sit, and stand so well. Every movement is studied and perfect.

They are letter perfect, too, in their lines, and no Shakespeare actor ever knew his part better than they know theirs. This result, we are told, has been produced by only one year's study, since they began their rehearsals last October, but of course the culture and experience of a lifetime go into each part, for the Passion Play is the great tradition of the village.

"I'm Only Forty-seven."

"Some of the papers said I was past sixty," protested Anton Lang. "I am only forty-seven." And he laughed. Playing the part for the third occasion, a rare honor, Herr Lang looks the picture of youth at times, at other moments the weight of care which presses upon the Christus gives the effect of years, but never of age, for his figure is too slight and youthful ever to be mistaken for that of a man older than the traditional thirty-three of the Christus.

Talking with Herr Lang, one finds a strong magnetism about him, and all are impressed with the same charm, which makes it very hard to leave him.

As Flambeau roamed about the village, he dropped into a wood-carver's shop to buy a hand-carved crucifix for a dear friend at Trinity College in Washington, when he chanced to ask the little maid at the counter what her part was in the play.

"I am Mary," she answered simply, and then Flambeau realized more deeply than ever before in his life what real grandeur is. This young girl, selling postcards and wooden crucifixes, was playing one of the star parts, that of the Blessed Virgin, and yet she was not at all afraid to follow her regular, daily calling.

Martha Veit, as she is named, was chosen this year for the part, following another wonderful "Mary," the Ottilie Swing of 1910. The latter married afterward, and had a most ideal home life until last February, when her beloved husband departed this life. Now she, too, is engaged in her own humble occupation in the village, but she has been given the great distinction of being permitted to be the understudy of the present "Mary," probably the first time that a woman who has been married has taken part in the play. Martha Veit also kindly posed for a snapshot.

Judas Is Fascinating.

Judas is another fascinating character, and Victor Flambeau would rather have stayed at the home of Guido Mayr, the sculptor, who plays the part this year, than elsewhere. But, alas! Herr Mayr is a poor man, an artist, with but a small house, so our courier reminded us, and there would not be room there for so many. However, Victor Flam-

beau lost no time in calling upon "Judas," with whom he had a most delightful interview, and he presented the invitation of The Washington Times for the sculptor to bring his work to Washington for exhibition next season.

The carving exhibited was marvelous in dexterity and feeling, and Guido Mayr, though he plays the "Judas," loves best to carve the Christus, of whom he has made many studies. They would be an inspiration if shown in Washington. Many artists of Oberammergau are producing rare creations, including the Veits, father and brother of Martha, who plays the "Mary," and the Langs, father and twin brother of Frau Boeld, where the Flambeau party stayed. The invitation will be conveyed to all, as it was delivered in writing to Anton Lang, the Christus, with the request that he make it public.

Should the Oberammergau artists accept, as it believed in the village that they will, the Art and Archaeology League of Washington would assist in their reception and exhibition, which probably would be held at the Art Center, under the auspices of Mrs. William Hitz, wife of Justice Hitz, of Washington.

Though the Passion Play is so widely known and discussed, few perhaps who have not attended it are familiar with the scenes presented, which are chosen with great care from the life of Christ. The official text of this year has been somewhat revised, as to certain former crudities, from the original play as written 100 years ago by Joseph Alois Daisenberger, then ecclesiastical councillor in Oberammergau. His version was a revision of the earlier play of 1634, acted in fulfillment of a vow.

It is undoubtedly the greatest survival of the old mystery, morality, and miracle plays of a former time, though in Europe the Passion Play has been revived this year in many towns and villages. The Oberammergau performance is given four times weekly, two principal presentations being Sunday and Wednesday, with a repetition on Monday and Thursday for the people unable to be accommodated with seats on the preceding days.

Hall Seats 4,000

The hall seats 4,000, and it is always full, with often a large crowd standing and filling every available place, many perhaps admitted without charge for standing room, in order that those unable to pay may not be turned away. At the first dress rehearsal, when the neighboring villages were invited to attend, the hall was simply jammed with 8,000 people, and it was then that a number of women fainted, so impressive was the effect. The play lasts an entire day, beginning at 8 a. m. and continuing until 12 o'clock, with a two-hour intermission, then resuming from 2 to 6 o'clock.

A chorus of more than forty men and women, in gala costumes, opens the play with two tableaux, "Adam and Eve Expelled From Paradise" and "The Adoration of the Cross," following which comes the "Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem," the Saviour riding the young ass and attended by an exulting throng with palms, singing praises.

In the Temple the Saviour finds the money-changers, whom he upbraids for dishonoring the house of His Father, and he expels them with the whip of cords and sets

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